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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PREL KDEM ID
SUBJECT: ENGAGING INDONESIA'S NEW LEGISLATORS

REF: JAKARTA 01837 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (U) This message is Sensitive but Unclassified -- Please handle accordingly.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Indonesian Parliament Deputy Speaker and five prominent legislators discussed with the DCM how best to further strengthen U.S.-Indonesia relations, focusing on defense, trade, and climate change. The legislators thanked the USG for its good governance programs and for the efforts of the U.S. Congress' House Democracy Partnership to reach out to Indonesia. END SUMMARY.

MEETING NEW LAWMAKERS

¶3. (SBU) On November 4, the DCM met with the new Deputy Speaker of Indonesia's Parliament (DPR) and five other legislators from the commissions on foreign policy and defense, trade and investment, and health. Priyo Budi Santoso is considered the most influential of the four DPR deputy speakers. Santoso emphasized that Parliament was committed to further strengthening U.S.-Indonesia collaboration. (Note: Indonesia's new Parliament was sworn in on October 1. Over half of its members are new and Mission has been working hard to engage the body--see reftels.)

PARTNERS IN DEMOCRACY BUILDING

¶4. (SBU) Mohammad Najib, Deputy Chair of the DPR Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation Committee and member of DPR Commission One, expressed his appreciation for U.S. support of Indonesia's democratic development. (Note: Mission engages closely with Commission One on foreign policy, defense and information issues.) He said that U.S. NGOs, such as the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute, were instrumental in training Indonesia's young politicians. He explained that he had participated in such training which prepared him well for his current position.

¶5. (SBU) Najib and the DCM also discussed Indonesia's democratic initiatives in the region. Najib was pleased to learn that the U.S. was sending a senior-level representative to the Bali Democracy Forum in December. DCM noted that Indonesia's peaceful elections this year were a significant milestone for its young democracy, and an example for other countries in the region and internationally.

REQUEST FOR EVEN STRONGER COOPERATION

¶6. (SBU) The legislators focused their remarks on security, trade, and climate change topics. They urged the USG to consider more training and exchange programs for the Indonesian armed forces. Legislators from Commission Six

(trade, industry, investment) asked that the U.S. expand investment beyond oil and gas to the manufacturing and high technology fields. They stressed that U.S.-Indonesian bilateral trade could be increased significantly beyond its current level of \$21 billion and that an important first step would be to make it easier for Indonesian businesspeople to get U.S. visas. Legislators would also like to see a concrete assistance program to promote Indonesia's small and medium entrepreneurs. The DCM agreed that we should build a relationship which responded to real opportunities in trade and investment.

MOVING FORWARD

¶7. (SBU) The legislators indicated that a key element of U.S. engagement with Parliament was through the exchanges and training provided by the U.S. Congress' House Democracy Partnership. They welcomed further opportunities to engage directly with members of Congress on technical and policy issues. The DCM underscored that we welcomed further engagement with Parliament, and would work to find opportunities to discuss and consult on key issues.

HUME